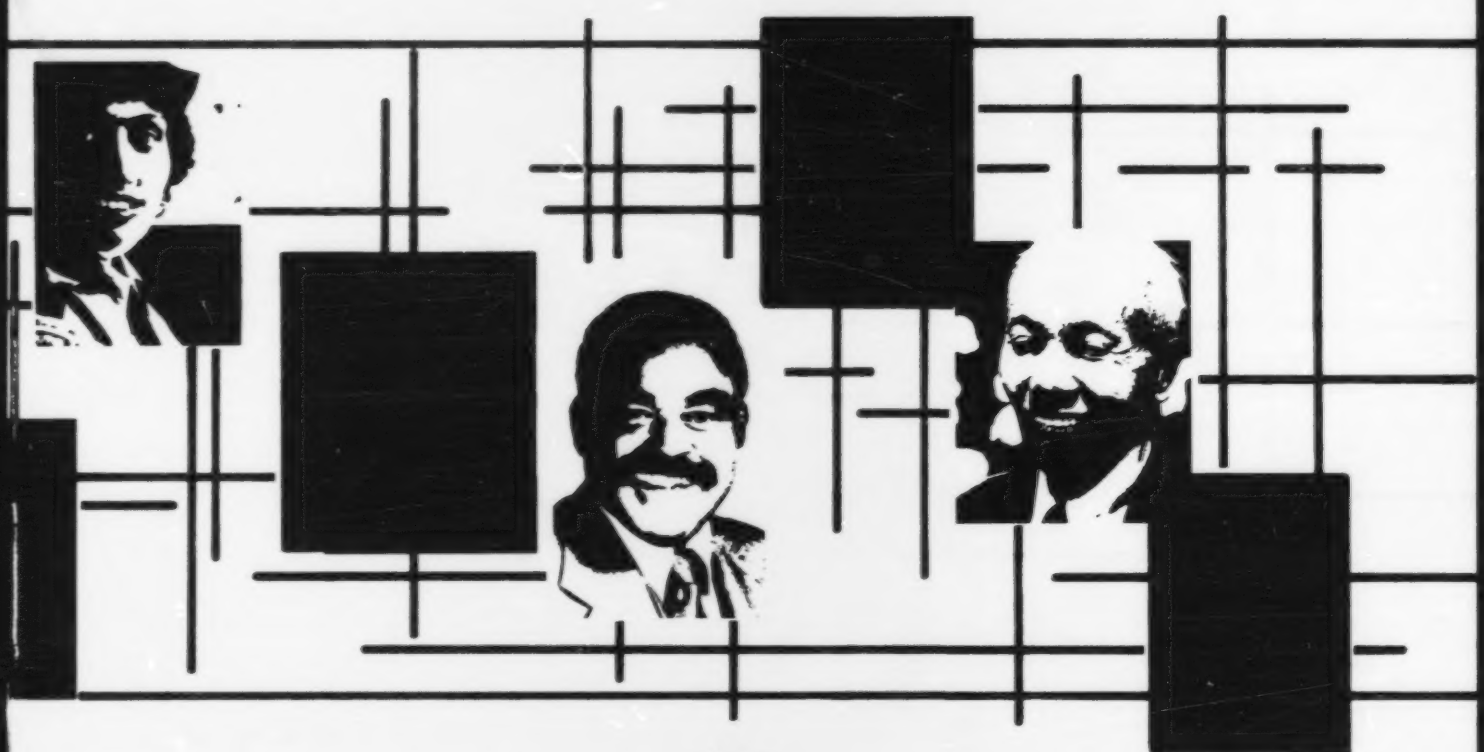
Race Relations Series # 4

Breaking the Barriers: Equality in Employment



FCM

Federation of Canadian Municipalities
Municipal Race Relations Program

91-06778/

Race Relations Series

Local governments, large and small, urban and rural are becoming leaders in race relations. The FCM's 1986 Policy Statement on Race Relations led to the Municipal Race Relations Program with assistance from the Multiculturalism Sector of the Department of the Secretary of State.

To help its members establish race relations policies and programs, the FCM's Municipal Race Relations Program has several activities underway:

- a resource centre and consultation service to provide information and expertise;
- a communications strategy to keep municipalities up-to-date;
- a National Action Committee on Race Relations comprising elected municipal officials and community leaders;
- "How To" manuals with guidelines on race relations policies, programs and practices.

Breaking the Barriers: Equality in Employment is an introduction to employment equity in a municipal context. It outlines a systematic plan of action that has effectively been used by many institutions across Canada. This manual is the fourth in a series. The others are:

1. **Getting Started - Local Government and Community/Race Relations**
2. **Dealing with Diversity - Multicultural Access to Local Government**
3. **Bridging the Gap - Cross-cultural and Race Relations Training for Municipal Government**

These publications serve as invaluable guides in meeting the challenge and opportunity of a culturally diverse community. For further information, please direct your inquiries to:

Race Relations Coordinator
Federation of Canadian Municipalities
24 Clarence Street
Ottawa, Ontario
K1N 5P3
(613) 237-5221
FAX 237-2965

ISBN: 0-919080-50-2 March 1991

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Acknowledgements

This manual was developed under the direction of the FCM's National Action Committee on Race Relations whose members are (March 1991):

Co-Chairman: Mayor **Art Eggleton**, *Toronto, Ontario*
Co-Chairman: **Alan DeSousa**, *St. Laurent, Quebec*

Mayor **Henry Dayday**, *Saskatoon, Saskatchewan*
Mayor **Bob Morrow**, *Hamilton, Ontario*
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Janice Dembo, *Toronto, Ontario*
James Francois, *Dartmouth, Nova Scotia*
Elmer Ghostkeeper, *Paddle Prairie, Alberta*
Helen Fotopulos, *Montreal, Quebec*
Waheed Malik, *Montreal, Quebec*
Lillian Ma, *Toronto, Ontario*
Valmond Romilly, *Vancouver, British Columbia*
Gurcharan Singh, *Ottawa, Ontario*

Many individual comments helped shape the manual. We gratefully acknowledge the contributions of the following:

Mary Dauphinee and **Ceta Ramkhalawansingh** (City of Toronto), **John Dennison** and **Mark O'Neill** (Secretary of State, Ottawa), **Ed Lam** (Chinese Canadian National Council), **Cyril Dabydeen** and **Jim Knight** (FCM, Ottawa).

A Changing Society Means Changing Training Needs

The Canadian labour force has changed dramatically over the past twenty years with the entry of more women, racial minorities, aboriginal peoples, and people with disabilities. What was once a homogeneous paid labour pool comprising of white able-bodied males between the ages of 25-55 is now diverse in gender, ethnicity, race, and disability. It is currently estimated that 70 per cent of all new entrants to the workforce will be women, racial minorities, aboriginal peoples, and disabled persons.

Attention is now being given to systems and approaches that will accommodate these changes in our society and eliminate discrimination and prejudice – both intentional and unintentional – in the workplace.

The employment systems of most organizations, including municipal governments, have not changed quickly enough to be in step with the times. More than likely recruitment, selection, training, promotion and compensation practices are outdated and inappropriate.

In 1984, a Royal Commission led by Judge Rosalie Abella submitted its ground-breaking report **Equality in Employment**, which recommended a law requiring all federally regulated employers, including crown corporations, government departments, agencies and businesses and corporations in the federally regulated private sector, to implement employment equity.

The Equality in Employment Report stated:

What is needed to achieve equality in employment is a massive policy response to systemic discrimination. This requires taking steps to bring each group to a point of fair competition. It means making the workplace respond by eliminating barriers that interfere unreasonably with employment options.

It is not that individuals in the designated groups are inherently unable to achieve equality on their own; it is that the obstacles in their way are so formidable and self-perpetuating that they cannot be overcome without intervention. It is both intolerable and insensitive if we simply wait and hope that the barriers will disappear with time. Equality in employment will not happen unless we make it happen.

The federal government responded by adopting the **Employment Equity Act** which requires that employment equity be implemented by federally regulated employers with 100 employees or more.

These employers are required to file an annual report on the representation and changes made respecting certain designated groups within their workforce – and the salary range of such employees – specifically women, Native people, persons with disabilities, and visible minorities.

The **Federal Contractors' Program** also requires that all suppliers with federal contracts worth over $200,000 and with over 100 employees must put in place an employment equity program. The Charter of Rights and

Freedoms, along with federal and provincial employment standards legislation and human rights codes, helps guarantee this right.

Where Do Municipalities Fit in?

A recent survey on race relations in municipalities conducted by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) indicates that more municipalities are implementing equal opportunity and employment equity programs, sometimes as part of their human resources system. These municipalities recognize that, as major employers in their communities, they must take concrete steps to remove discriminatory barriers in employment.

Like other orders of government, municipalities as public employers have a responsibility to set an example in promoting equality for all their diverse citizenry. Some municipalities are also examining their influence over the employment practices of private firms which supply them with goods and services, and many firms are beginning to respond positively to these policies.

In many organizations – not least municipalities – special groups face very distinct types of barriers in the workforce, and these barriers necessitate a variety of responses.

Some of these approaches may embrace passive non-discrimination (the removal of systemic discrimination) and limited measures (the implementation of systems-related policies). When combined, these two are referred to as an **Equal Opportunity Program**. While the latter is often quite extensive in its actions, experience shows it does little to improve the position of special groups.

Another approach involves **special measures** based on the assumption that the target groups have not benefitted from Equal Opportunity initiatives. These special measures, plus Equal Opportunity-type actions, comprise what has come to be known as **Affirmative Action**. As Mary Dauphinee, Director of the Equal Opportunity Division (City of Toronto), has indicated: "Affirmative Action programs provide special procedures which have the potency to overcome the negative effects that employment exclusion and past socialization have had on special groups and on those who make the employment decisions about them."

While "affirmative action" may be seen as an American term, "employment equity" is seen as a specifically Canadian term first coined by Judge Rosalie Abella. She says, "Employment Equity is designed to obliterate the present and residual effects of discrimination and to open equitably the competition for employment opportunities to those arbitrarily excluded." She adds that it requires "a special blend of what is necessary, what is fair, and what is workable."

Why Employment Equity?

Good employers understand the importance of using human resources to the fullest. In recruiting, hiring, promoting and training, an organization's systems should allow all people of diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds the equal opportunity to compete on an even basis.

However, recent studies have confirmed the existence of discrimination against non-whites in the workplace. A 1985 study entitled **Who Gets the Work** prepared by the Urban Alliance on Race Relations and the Social Planning Council of Metro Toronto found unequal treatment of applicants based on skin colour. The study also found that White candidates received three job offers for every one received by Blacks who were similar in terms of age, sex, and educational and employment histories.

A 1988 study by the **Canadian Recruiters Guild** found that most recruiters in Canada discriminate against job applicants on the basis of age, race, sex or disabilities. Ninety-seven per cent of executives in charge of hiring employees discriminated on the basis of disability and colour, and 81 per cent on the basis of gender. In addition, all agency recruiters have, at one time or another, received direct discriminatory requests from corporate recruiters and hiring managers – and 94 per cent of agency recruiters complied with those requests.

In 1983, a study by the Ontario Human Rights Commission of Business Administration graduates of Ontario universities found that White candidates were hired more often, received greater income and advanced more rapidly than non-White candidates, despite the fact that the latter submitted more applications, attended more interviews and held similar qualifications.

All this confirms that historically certain groups have been disproportionately affected by discrimination: Native people, visible minorities, persons with disabilities, and women. Empirical evidence also suggests that members of these groups suffer from higher rates of unemployment, occupational segregation, and lower rates of pay.

To ensure that these groups are treated equally and without discrimination requires mechanisms to accommodate their differences by the removal of barriers to their employment.

Thus the federal government, along with each of the provinces, has human rights commissions which are mandated to enforce codes prohibiting discrimination on grounds such as sex, ancestry, colour, race or disability.

Human rights commissions also deal with individual complaints of discrimination. But resolving discrimination on a case-by-case basis is inadequate in responding to the magnitude of the problem.

Accordingly, many employers are adopting programs like employment equity, which are essentially pro-active and results-oriented. Such programs lessen the stress on the target groups and foster a social order in which all can feel comfortable in striving to do their best in meaningful and useful occupations. Only then can they play their rightful role in a Canadian society founded on true equality and respect for all.

Two Kinds of Discrimination

Equality in employment means freedom from discrimination or arbitrary denial of opportunity.

Discrimination in this context means practices or attitudes that have, whether by design or accident, the effect of limiting an individual's or a group's opportunities.

The two main kinds of discrimination are:

1. **Intentional or personal discrimination** - which is discrimination that takes place when an employer's personal attitude towards members of certain groups impedes their employment opportunities. For example, a manager may refuse to hire minority applicants because of a personal prejudice often stemming from negative stereotyping thatsuch persons are not competent, reliable or able. Personal discrimination prevents an employer from fairly assessing an individual's ability or potential.

2. **Systemic Discrimination** - which is not always intentional or motivated by ill-will, but is the inadvertent or subtle by-product of an organization's long-established policies, practices or systems. Attitudes about other groups of people might have been "built in" to the system unconsciously, for example by the development of "an old boys' network" which has become integral to a *modus operandi*. Indeed, systemic discrimination manifests itself in the way an organization recruits, trains, promotes and compensates employees, defines job roles and responsibilities, and sets the conditions of employment. Many organizational practices seemed to have been designed for a homogeneous -- not a culturally diverse workforce.

Combatting systemic discrimination needs systemic remedies such as employment equity -- which involves a review and adjustment of employment systems to remove discriminatory barriers.

While employment equity might be viewed as preferential treatment for certain groups, it is in fact the removal of bias or advantage for the dominant group. It is also a positive measure against the discrimination that has gone on for years.

Palpable examples of systemic discrimination in the workplace are:

- restricted recruitment methods such as word-of-mouth and closed competitions which limit the pool of applicants;
- preference given to Canadian over non-Canadian experience;
- requiring Canadian degrees rather than considering non-Canadian academic or professional credentials and other kinds of work experiences;
- linguistic and/or cultural biases in the selection process (e.g. unfavorable views towards different accents, cultural behaviour patterns, etc);
- stereotypical and negative attitudes about certain groups which have become generalized and may be seen as "normal" or "acceptable" ;

- use of tests or language and physical requirements not directly related to job performance; and

- use of dress code which is not a necessity to restrict certain religious groups (e.g. Sikh Canadians).

Harassment

Racial harassment is another form of discrimination which may be oblique or overt, but always insidious. Unwelcome racial or sexual comments, or similar overtures of co-workers, can constitute harassment and may include any or all of the following:

- name-calling, which is degrading to a person's racial or ethnic background;

- insulting gestures or practical jokes based on racial or ethnic grounds;

- stereotypical comments about a co-worker's race or ethnic background;

- upsetting racially or ethnically offensive gestures or material; and

- remarks that cast aspersions on a co-worker's creed.

Workplace harassment tends immediately to hurt an individual's sense of self-esteem and identity, and may affect negatively job performance, relationship with fellow employees, productivity, health and safety.

There must be a greater sensitivity to the cultural or religious differences of racial minority group members in the workplace or those seeking to enter it, and a fairer assessment of their non-Canadian experience or education. For Native peoples, there must be accommodation of cultural and geographical realities, education and training support. For visible minority women, there must be fair consideration for promotions into more responsible positions, taking into consideration distinctive cultural norms relating to family life, day care, etc., as well as different forms of assertiveness in a corporate milieu that seemed organized for a male-defined, Anglo-Celtic "normal" work pattern.

Employment equity means placing the emphasis on the systems which are responsible for the barriers so that all workers will be permitted equal opportunity to develop their potential to the fullest. In addition, it means that employers will have a broader pool of talent and abilities to help build a creative and highly productive corporate environment.

Equality in Employment - A Municipal Responsibility

The Costs of Inequality

Some of the costs of not actively fostering the employment and full participation of all cultural groups are:

- the inefficient use of human resources -- not hiring and using the best person for the job;
- poor employee relations/low morale in the working environment;
- higher absenteeism/turnover;
- increased employee complaints;
- risk of costly litigation;
- decreased productivity and encouragement of innovative ideas (i.e. poor creativity);
- diminished corporate reputation; and
- frustration of employees' aspirations and needs.

Myths and Facts

MYTH:
We do not discriminate because everyone receives the same treatment.

FACT:
Identical treatment is not equal treatment. Treating everybody the same, regardless of race, ethnicity or language, is identical treatment but does not ensure equal treatment. A parallel can be drawn with the situation of the persons with disabilities who cannot be treated the same as everyone in that they are expected to use the stairs. They may need ramps and elevators to obtain equal access to the workplace.

MYTH:
Members of certain groups are under-represented in the workforce because they are not qualified, or do not apply for available jobs.

FACT:
Members of designated groups are under-represented for a number of reasons, the so-called "chill factor," and artificial barriers in recruitment. In many cases, minorities may be denied positions because of overt or covert discrimination. Minorities may also be under-represented due to the "chill factor" in which candidates do not apply because of the belief that they are unwelcome. In addition, recruitment practices may be biased: for example, word-of-mouth recruiting in a predominantly white male workforce is likely to attract more white male workers.

MYTH:
Employment Equity, Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action are all the same.

FACT:
"Employment Equity" refers to a comprehensive and active planning process adopted by an employer to ensure appropriate representation of designated groups with numerical goals within the employer's workforce. "Affirmative Action" is usually prescriptive and outlines the ways to implement the program without necessarily imposing quotas. "Equal Employment Opportunity" is a policy of non-discrimination without goals.

MYTH:
We've had no problems, so we don't see the need for an employment equity policy and program.

FACT:
Unfortunately, most employment discrimination is covert and difficult to detect without an employment systems analysis. Just because there have not been any complaints does not mean discrimination does not exist. Most organizations have some form of systemic discrimination in their policies and practices.

MYTH:
The adoption of employment equity means trading productivity and effectiveness for representativeness and equity.

FACT:
Equity and effectiveness are not mutually exclusive. In fact, they can be quite compatible as demonstrated by companies such as Xerox and Westinghouse which have embraced employment equity and have benefitted from increasing the diversity of their workforce. They have found that decision-making, innovation, creativity and productivity have improved by making greater use of a broader base of talent, skills and knowledge.

MYTH:
Employment Equity is reverse discrimination.

FACT:
Studies have shown that certain minority groups are denied employment opportunities because of their race, ethnicity or cultural background. Systemic barriers in employment practices may intentionally or unintentionally limit their opportunities. Employment equity is designed to eliminate barriers by identifying and adjusting employment systems to provide equal access and opportunity. Employment equity is not reverse discrimination but a way to reverse or "catch-up" on the effects of past discrimination.

The Benefits of Employment Equity

There are compelling legal, economic and social reasons reasons for municipal governments to promote fair employment practices.
First, all employers are legally obligated by federal and provincial human rights and employment standards legislation to ensure that no individual is treated unfairly because of gender, ancestry, colour, race or disability. A reduction in human rights complaints can save a great deal of time, money and human resources for an organization.

Second, employers who practice equality in the workplace can fully use and harness an increasingly diverse labour force. Diversity brings a variety of perspectives, experiences, values, ideas and work styles. An employer who understands these differences can also benefit from the skills and talents offered by diversity. Innovation and improved decision-making may result as managers are challenged to manage diversity creatively.

An organization that has adapted to a changing population can develop the capacity to adapt to a changing marketplace.
The elimination of discrimination from hiring practices expands an employer's pool of skilled applicants and allows all employees to apply their skills and abilities.

Some employers view diversity as an opportunity for flexible and creative leadership rather than a hindrance and a problem. In the management of diverse human resources, employment equity leads to improved morale, optimal productivity, and lower staff turnover. Employment equity is results-oriented, aimed at identifying and eliminating discriminatory practices and systemic barriers to employment opportunities. The goal is to bring about the fair representation and to improve the income of women, aboriginal peoples, people with disabilities, and minorities in the organization's workforce.

Employment equity will not happen, however, unless the organization from top to bottom is committed to it. A series of crucial steps are necessary to ensure that an organization achieves its Employment Equity goals.

A Strategy for Change

Step 1: Preparation

A) Establish senior level commitment

The success of any Employment Equity program depends greatly on the commitment and support shown by senior management. It is desirable to have a written policy statement developed in consultation with employee representatives (e.g. unions) and issued by the mayor or reeve affirming the organization's commitment to Employment Equity.

The statement should be circulated to all employees and posted in locations with high visibility. It is important that the policy statement be accompanied by a memorandum explaining the rationale for the program and its implications for present and future employees. The memorandum should also list the names of the persons responsible for the program and outline future plans for its implementation--such as work force analysis, employment systems analysis, etc. It may be useful to re-issue the policy statement every three months to reaffirm the commitment.

B) Establish a mechanism for consultation with a cross-section of employees or their representatives (union representatives)

A joint labour-management committee could be formed or an Employment Equity advisory committee with mechanisms for consultation with employee representatives could be established. Because of the community orientation of municipalities, it might be appropriate to invite representatives from a municipality's race relations committee (or other community organization) to sit on such an advisory committee.

C) Assign senior staff and resources

Staff and other resource needs will depend on the size and complexity of the organization. There will be a need for workforce research and analysis, for training, and for communicating the organization's interest and commitment to managers and employees. There may be federal or provincial government support to hire staff and set up a program.

D) Identify organizational values and attitudes, and sources of support or resistance for employment equity.

As with any new program, there may be some resistance to change. It is important to be proactive and identify those sources of possible resistance and deal with them positively before they become unmanageable.

Step 2: Analysis

A) Collect personnel information

Some of the information necessary for employment equity planning will be available in personnel files, e.g., salary, sex, benefit package, seniority status, occupation, and career history in the organization. Other data, particularly on the distribution of members of designated groups in the employer's organization, will have to be gathered by the employer.

Two convenient points at which individuals may be asked to identify themselves as members of designated groups for Employment Equity purposes are: at the point of application for a job (pre-employment), and when the individual is part of the employer's workforce. Such exercise is permitted under human rights' legislation.

There are three useful methods to identify employees:

1) self-identification by a direct employee survey;
2) supervisor identification; and
3) supervisor identification followed by employee verification.

It is important that employees voluntarily agree to be identified or identify themselves as members of designated groups. If an employer administers a self-identification questionnaire, confidentiality should be assured, and a clear commitment at senior levels to the Employment Equity program should be communicated. It must be stressed that the collected information will be used only for Employment Equity purposes. Provincial and Canadian human rights legislation permits employers to collect data regarding race, disability or gender as long as it is not being used to discriminate. A climate of trust is critical, and every effort should be made to encourage employees to self-identify and to participate in the program. The rationale for the program should be explained and a copy of the policy statement included. Categories for self-identification should be explained with examples.A contact person should be identified for questions or comments.

It may be helpful to meet with employees or their representatives regularly to answer questions and to respond to concerns or suggestions. Some employers have formed committees to monitor self-identification. Members have included union representatives, human rights experts, management representatives, members of community groups representing the interests of designated groups, and employee representatives. Other employers have assigned this responsibility to an advisory committee established to oversee the entire program.

It is also important to recognize that the onus should not be left solely to the employees to self-identify. Relevant empirical data could be augmented by supervisors collecting a range of other data in order to facilitate the entry of target group members in their workforce.

B) Evaluate current workforce information

Personnel files and the results of the organization's self-identification exercise will provide the data required to prepare a basic **workforce profile.**

The first step is to convert the employer's job titles into Standard Occupational Codes. The Standard Occupational Codes (SOC) refers to the occupational classification system developed by Statistics Canada which is currently refining the system towards National Occupation Codes (NOC) that might be more useful for employment equity purposes. Employers can obtain the Codes through most public libraries, many academic libraries, and all Depository Libraries; also, they may be purchased from Supply and Services Canada.

Once the status of designated group employees is known and the employer's job titles converted into Standard Occupational Codes, the workforce profile may be used to analyze how this representation compares to the representation of qualified designated group members in the general labour force.

This requires the use of availability data which refers to external labour force data (numbers of qualified persons available for work) for a defined geographical recruitment area. Recruitment areas will vary for certain occupational groups.

C) Review formal and informal personnel policies and practices

The employment systems review seeks to determine whether any personnel policies and practices impede or facilitate qualified designated group members from having equal access to employment opportunities. The employment systems review can involve an examination of the following:

- **Recruitment system checklist**

1) Are job postings and bulletin boards accessible to all employees, including those who may work in branch offices or may be disabled (e.g. wheelchair users)?

2) Are most job vacancies filled by word-of-mouth recruitment or are they widely advertised?

3) Are organizations representing under-represented groups informed about job vacancies?

4) Job posters accurately emphasize the qualifications and duties most central to the job, and are skill components broken down to reflect actual job requirements?

5) Do advertisements for positions include a statement indicating that you are an "Employment Equity Employer"?

6) Do you use ethnic media, in addition to mainstream media, to advertise positions?

7) Are the language and graphics used in job postings and advertisements free of gender and cultural biases?

8) Is "experience," asked for as opposed to "Canadian experience," "university education" rather than "degree from a Canadian university"?

9) Does your job application conform to human rights legislation?

10) Is the Personnel Department accessible to people with physical disabilities (including hearing and sight impairment)?

11) Have personnel staff received cross-cultural and human rights training?

- **Selection processes**

1) Are tests validated for job-relatedness?

2) Are tests checked for gender and racial biases?

3) Are tests administered by trained personnel?

4) Are testing conditions standardized?

5) Is the selection process, including interviews, fully documented and standardized?

6) Are managers and interviewers aware of the organization's employment equity goals and informed about human rights legislation?

7) Are skill, educational, knowledge, abilities and experience requirements reasonable and not just used as "cheap screening"?

- **Training and development**

1) Are all employees aware of available training and development opportunities?

2) Is there a fair and objective process whereby employees are selected for training and development? Is there performance appraisal? Is there career counselling?

3) Do employees have access to in-house counselling? Do they have access to outside career counselling?

- **Performance evaluation systems**

1) Have you eliminated the use of "market value" as a key criterion in your job evaluation system?

2) Is the ranking of certain jobs based on subjective opinions rather than on established, objective criteria?

3) Do job descriptions accurately reflect the jobs themselves?

4) Are certain jobs undervalued because they have been traditionally filled by women, visible minorities, aboriginal peoples or persons with disabilities?

- **Transfers, promotions and upward mobility**

1) Have you identified formal lines of progression or career paths for each occupational group?

2) Has this information been made available to all employees a part of a career counselling or performance appraisal session?

3) Are there entry level jobs in each job category from which employees have the opportunity to advance?

4) Are there fair and objective criteria to select employees for promotion or other forms of upward mobility opportunities?

5) Are there fair and objective criteria to assess

- levels of compensation?
- employee benefits?
- lay-offs, recall and termination processes?
- disciplinary procedures?
- conditions of employment?
- facilities (building design) and access to assistance?

To examine whether there is systemic discrimination involves assessing the policy, practice or system by the following criteria:

Legality - Is such an exercise relevant or applicable to human rights and employment standards legislation?

Job-relatedness - Is the exercise job-related?

Validity - Is it valid? Does the test, or required qualification, have a direct relationship to job performance?

Consistency - Is it consistently applied?

Adverse impact - Does it have adverse impact? (i.e., affect members of designated groups more than those in dominant groups)?

D) Identify barriers in policies and practices to Employment Equity

Step 3: Develop Employment Equity Plan

A) Establish goals and timetables

The workforce analysis and review of employment systems will give the employer a starting point to develop reasonable goals and timetables.In cases where preferential treatment is decided on, numerical objectives (i.e. percentage points) should be established to increase the representation by occupational group for each of the four designated groups (in this instance, racial minorities) within a specified time.

B) Design new or modified personnel systems and procedures

C) Develop special measures and reasonable accommodations

It may be necessary to adopt remedies and procedures such as special recruitment or training programs. Special candidates ' inventories and bridging and developmental positions reflect a special measure designed to move designated group members into "access points" of employment systems. Specifically, the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the Canadian Human Rights Act, and most provincial human rights codes allow the adoption of special measures to improve opportunities for designated groups in the workforce.

D) Determine monitoring and accountability mechanisms

Some of the common monitoring tools and processes include:

- periodic internal workforce analysis and external comparison
- continual monitoring of employment practices and testing for adverse effects
- comprehensive plan assessment

There should be an assignment of clear responsibility and accountability for each activity.

Step 4: Implementation

A) Assign line management responsibility and accountability

B) Implement Employment Equity Plan of Action

C) Support with effective communications strategy

It is essential that all employees be well-informed about the Employment Equity program through meetings, and small group workshops reinforced by memorandum and other written material.

Step 5: Evaluation and Monitoring

A) Establish feedback and problem-solving mechanisms

Annual Employment Equity reports and periodic reports on special projects will allow all employees to follow the organization's progress on implementing Employment Equity, as well as reinforce management commitment and accountability.

B) Carry out regular orientation and training for supervisors and staff

Employment Equity plans need to be supported and promoted on a regular and continual basis at all levels, particularly by management. Managers and supervisors who have the responsibility for the personnel function will need to be trained to apply new skills in integrating the practice of Employment Equity into their decision-making.

Training for supervisors may be needed to help them become more effective and sensitive to a diverse workforce. Employment Equity should be incorporated as a part of management training and orientation, and included in both internal and external communications.

C) Follow through on management performance evaluation

D) Reward achievements

E) Maintain and update personnel information

F) Make adjustments to program as required

Contract Compliance

Through a contract compliance policy, local government uses its contracting powers as a lever to improve business policies and practices. Potential contractors are required to provide evidence of measures to improve the representation of minorities in their recruitment, hiring, training and promotion.

The need for contract compliance is supported by many research studies which have documented the pervasive nature of discrimination. A study prepared in May 1985 for the Urban Alliance on Race Relations and the Social Planning Council of Metro Toronto found that, of 199 large employers (all having over 50 employees) in the Toronto area, 51 per cent expressed some negative attitude towards non-Whites as a group; only 9 per cent expressed a firm belief in racial equality and a commitment to achieving that equality; a disturbingly high percentage (49 per cent) of complaints about discrimination were handled by disciplining the non-white complainant.

Although the situation in other municipalities may not be identical, there may be similiar problems.It should be noted, however, that contract compliance has been used in Britain and the United States for several years and is now being introduced in Canada.

Under the Federal Contractors Program the federal government requires companies that have contracts worth over $200,000 and over 100 employees to commit to employment equity. The contract compliance scheme applies to about 100 companies with a total of 300,000 employees.

The **City of Toronto** approved a Contract Compliance Program in 1985. The program started for the private sector, but has evolved to include city funds disbursed to grantees and civic agencies. In general, the program applies to all those firms which provide goods and services to the City and have a direct contractual relationship. Firms wishing to obtain City business are required to file data on the characteristics of their workforces, including salary information. Firms which are successful in their bids to provide business to the City must also agree to implement non-discrimination policies. Significantly, an increasing number of private sector employers in the Toronto area are starting to introduce employment equity programs.

Municipal government can have a profound influence on the employment practices of local employers through purchasing. Collectively, municipal governments buy 25 per cent more goods and services than the federal government.

A municipality can adopt a contract compliance policy which requires that a potential supplier have an employment equity program in place.

Ultimately, a commitment to employment equity in municipal government and by businesses in the municipality can be seen as beneficial — not only to the organizations but to the local economy as a whole. There is strong evidence that bias pervades the employment process, which means that employers are not always choosing the best person for the job or are promoting the best person.

When the most appropriate and talented persons are chosen through a fair and objective system, it improves a company's organizational performance, efficiency and productivity. And members of Boards of Trade and Chambers of Commerce are usually persuaded that in employment equity programs the benefits far outweigh the costs.

Visible Minority Women and Youth Employment

Youth and women have an unemployment rate probably two to three times higher than other workers. The situation for ethnic and racial minority youth and women is even more severe. Youth suffer from lack of experience, inadequate job skills, and discrimination. With minority women, the discrimination stems from their gender and pigmentation, as well as other variables sometimes associated with culture, language skills, appropriate accreditation of their training, day-care requirements, etc. Because this group faces distinct types of barriers in the workforce, special efforts should be made to ameliorate their situation. Tokenism should be dispensed with. Minority women should be seen as having equal rights in the workforce. Systemic changes must steer away from problems dealing with individual attitudes and emphasize systems that are the barriers. Such efforts would overcome the problem of underpaid jobs forced on minority women. As Mary Dauphinee (City of Toronto) observes: "Equal Opportunity programs have been seen to be for middle class white women, and even the ones that extend to minorities tend to stress the problems of men. Many women seem to fall through the cracks when Equal Opportunity is addressed."

Municipal government can play an important part in helping women and youth improve their opportunities in the labour market through particular employment programs for these two groups. For instance, some municipalities have allocated a certain percentage of their available summer jobs to minority youth; one obvious area where youth can work is in recreational departments (though not exclusively). Other municipalities have developed leadership and skill training programs for youth volunteers to help improve their chances of employment in a wide variety of fields. Similar programs — though on a more comprehensive scale — can be created to accommodate visible minority women or those from the cultural communities, especially those who might not have professional training, and who might have been out of the labour force for some time, or who are recent arrivals in Canada.

Other municipalities have launched special employment programs in cooperation with private corporations. For example, the City of North York started a summer employment program called "Reach for the Top" with corporations such as Global Television, the *Toronto Star*, IBM Canada, Bata Shoes Ltd., AT&T, Ramada Hotel—Don Valley, Toronto Dominion Bank, Cadillac Fairview, and Xerox Canada. Because discrimination was limiting the employment prospects of minority youth, technical, supervisory and management positions were allocated specifically to outstanding high school and university students from minorities. As the president of Xerox Canada says: "Selection of personnel is one of the most critical decisions we make. We approach Employment Equity as we do all other business priorities. As a competitive and successful company, we have to make the best use of all available and qualified resources."

Other Employment Initiatives

Many municipalities—large and small—are considering or implementing worthwhile employment equity programs. Some of these evolve from the minority communities themselves working in cooperation with city officials. Large municipalities such as Toronto have been in the forefront of these changes. Medium-sized ones, such as Ottawa through its Advisory Committee on Visible Minorities, have also been active. For instance, Ottawa organized a series of successful forums called "Focus on Employment": representatives from business, government, and community groups participated together in setting up booths and meeting with potential employers and service-providers to facilitate employment opportunities for visible minorities. A formal assessment of this program funded by the Secretary of State has taken place.

Regina has actively responded to its largest minority community—the Native population. To increase the representation of Natives in its workforce, the City identified 75 casual positions to form a base for hiring future aboriginal employees. A recent Native employment program resulted in the hiring of seven Native firefighters and four Native transit drivers. A Native housing coordinator was hired to work with Natives in finding adequate rental accommodation. And because of the high mortality rate among Natives, two Native community health workers were hired to improve outreach with this community.

Saskatoon has also introduced specific measures through its Affirmative Action program since 1987. As aboriginal peoples comprise one of its target groups, the City has commenced an equivalency testing program in language and mathematical skills, in cooperation with a local community college. Thus far, the City has hired 89 aboriginal persons — 73 per cent of its goal in this area — though most of the appointments have been in temporary or seasonal jobs.

Montréal initiated a series of actions in both its own jurisdiction and through its role in the Montréal Urban Community (MUC) and among its city-owned businesses and agencies. For example, the transit corporation achieved a 25 per cent hiring objective for bus drivers and maintenance workers. In May 1989, Montreal introduced its Employment Equity Program, PAECC (*Le Programme d'accèss à l'àgalité en emploi pour les communauté culturelles de la Ville de Montréal*). The goal of the program is to help integrate the over 30 per cent of the population of the city which is composed of ethnic minorities. In January 1990, Montréal announced a goal of hiring 25 per cent of new recruits from "cultural communities" for jobs open to outside recruiting. As well, Montréal's Intercultural Bureau and its Corporate Affairs Department have organized a series of twenty briefing sessions with cultural community organizations in order to explain the hiring policy and procedures of the City. Other more specific measures include a publicity campaign on careers as firefighters; targetting secondary schools with a high concentration of ethnic students; and an educational program in intercultural and interracial relations for all City employees.

Halifax set up special employment provisions in 1989 with assistance from the Department of Secretary of State. An advisory committee is changing the recruitment practices for disadvantaged groups to make jobs more easily available. An Employment Equity Coordinator was hired in 1990 to help facilitate this program.

Toronto has implemented a well-defined system of goals and time-tables in its employment equity program. The City has now placed the onus for implementing employment equity and race relations on the fourteen commissioners heading departments. Thus, three of the ten criteria used to appraise a commissioner's performance are human rights, employment equity, and race relations.

It should be noted that in 1983, only 6.5 per cent of the City's workforce was comprised of members of visible minorities. As of June 30, 1990, this percentage was increased to 13.4, more than double the increase in percentage points. What is more important is that minority representation has been achieved at all levels, not just at lower levels.

Vancouver's Equal Opportunity Office (EEO) works closely with the Personnel Department to ensure that all job postings are made available to the community. More than 150 organizations receive job postings every week. Information sessions are also regularly held to explain the city's recruitment process; and since 1986, the City has implemented a tracking system to determine whether its workforce is representative of the community at large. Training is a key aspect of the EEO's office. In September 1989, the Hastings Institute in Vancouver received funding from the Department of Secretary of State, with one of its goals being to "enhance employment equity" for target groups. The Institute offers multicultural and employment equity training to the public and private sectors, and non-profit and voluntary organizations.

More and more, municipalities across Canada are recognizing the importance of concrete action in response to the call for employment equity. With a continually changing workforce and demographic shifts, as well as increasing globalization, municipalities help shape the workforce to meet their needs and mirror the diverse communities in which we live.

Resources

Potential Funding Sources

Ministry of Multiculturalism and Citizenship
15 Eddy St.
Hull, Quebec,
K1A 0M5
Phone: (819) 994-2124

(Or contact the regional and/or district office of this federal department in your area.)

Employment and Immigration Canada
Employment Equity Branch
140 Promenade du Portage
Phase IV, 5th Floor
Ottawa/Hull
K1A 0J9
(819) 994-4655

(Or contact the Employment Equity Consultant at the regional office of this department in your area.)

Ontario Ministry of Citizenship,
Race Relations Directorate
20th Floor, 77 Bloor St. West
Toronto, Ontario
M7A 2R9
(416)965-1613

Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs
17th Floor, 77 Bay St.
Toronto, Ontario
M5G 2E5
(416) 585-7041

Ontario Women's Directorate
Suite 2100,
480 University Avenue
Toronto, Ontario
M5G IV2
(416) 585-7414

Multiculturalism Programs Branch
Department of the Provincial Secretary
Room 902
865 Hornby St.
Vancouver, B.C.
V6Z 2G3
(604)660-2395

Department of Culture and Multiculturalism
CN Tower
10004-104th Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta
T5J 0K5
(405)427-6530

Manitoba Intercultural Council
Department of Cultural, Heritage, and Recreation
Room 500
283 Banntyne Ave
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R3B 3B2
(204) 945-3873

Arts and Multicultural Branch
Department of Multiculturlaism and Recreation
1949 Hamilton Street
Regina, Saskatewan
S4P 3V7
(306) 787-5743

Ministry des Communautes Culturelles et de L'immagration
355 rue McGill
Montréal, Québéc
H2Y 2E8
(514) 873-2445

Culture and Heritage Branch
Department of Tourism, Recreation and Heritage
Box 12345
Fredericton, N.B.
E3B 5C3
(506) 453-7424

Cultural Affairs, Historic Resources and Youth
Department of Culture, Recreation and Youth
Confedertion Bldg., West block
Prince Phillip Drive
St. John's, Newfoundland
A1C 5T7
(709) 576-3650

Cultural Affairs Branch
Dept. of Tourism & Culture
5151 Terminal Road, 3rd Floor
Box 456
Halifax, N.S.
B3J 2R5
(902) 424-4179

Department of Education, Advanced Education & Manpower
Box 2703
Whitehorse, Y.T.
Y1A 2L9
(403) 667-5129

Cultural Affairs
Dept. of Culture & Communications
Box 1370
Yellowknife, N.W.T.
X1A 2L9
(403) 667-5102

Department of Community & Cultural Affairs
Jones Bldg.
11 Kent Street
Box 2000
Charlottetown, P.E.I.
C1A 7N8
(902) 368-5280

Suggested References

Abella, Rosalie. Equality in Employment: A Royal Commission Report. Ottawa: Supply and Services Canada, 1984.

Thomas, Barb and Novogrodsky, Charles. Combatting Racism in the Workplace: A Course for Workers. Toronto: Cross Cultural Communication Centre, 1983.

House of Commons. Equality Now!: Report of the Special Committee on Visible Minorities in Canadian Society. Ottawa, 1984.

Dauphinee, Mary. "Equal Oportunity, Affirmative Action, Employment Equity: One City's Experience" (unpublished). Equal Opportunity Division, City of Toronto (l990).

Report--Focus on Employment (unpublished), City of Ottawa's Advisory Committee on Visible Minorities, Ottawa (l990).

Steps to Resolving Racial Conflict at the Workplace (produced by the Ontario Federation of Labour).

Allan, Jane. Employment Equity: How We Can Use it to Fight Workplace Racism. Op. cit.

Bosset, Pierre. La discriminatioin indirecte dans le domain de l'emploi - aspects juridiques. Cowansville, Quebec: Les Editions Yvon Blais.

Chicha-Pontbriant, Marie Therese. Discrimination systemique, fondement et methodolgie des programmes d' acces a l'egalite en emploi. Op. cit.

Meade, Catherine.A. Employment Equity for Visible Minority Women. Ottawa: Communications Branch, Multiculturalism and Citizenship Canada.

Multiculturalism Means Business. Op. cit.

The Avalon Program for Public Service Managers. Calgary: Institute of Multicultural Resource Development

Jain, Harish. Anti-Discrimination Staffing Policies: Implications of Human Rights Legislation for Employees and Trade Unions. McMaster University, Hamilton, Ontario.

A Guide to Screening and Selection in Employment. Ottawa: Canadian Human Rights Commission, 1985.

Contacts:

Canadian Labour Congress
2841 Riverside Drive
Ottawa, Ontario
K1V 8X7
Phone: (613) 521-3400

Ontario Federation of Labour
15 Gervais Drive
Don Mills, Ontario
M3C 1Y8
(416) 441-2731

Manitoba Federation of Labour
104 Union Centre
570 Portage Avenue
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R3C OG4
(204) 947-1400

Immigrant Women's Association of Manitoba
208--323 Portage Avenue
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R38 2Cl
(204) 943-8612

The Hastings Institute
c/o Equal Employment Opportunity Program
City of Vancouver
Vancouver, B.C.
V5Y 1V4
(604) 873-7011

Cross-Cultural Communication Centre
1991 Dufferin Street
Toronto, Ontario
M6E 3P9
(416) 760-7855

Contract Compliance Program
Equal Opportunity Division
City of Toronto
Suite 301, 180 Dundas St. West
Toronto, Ontairo
M5G 1Z8
(416) 392-7855

Canadian Ethnocultural Council
Suite 1100,
25l Laurier Ave. West
Ottawa, Ontario
KlP 5J6
(613) 230-3867

Aboriginal Employment Section
Native Council of Canada
2nd Floor, 384 Bank St.
Ottawa, Ontario
K2P 1Y4
(613) 238-3511

Women's Bureau
Labour Canada
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0J2
(613) 997-1550

Canadian Human Rights Commission
400-90 Sparks St.
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 1Z1
(613) 996-0026

(Or consult the regional office of the Canadian Human Rights Commission in your area.)

You could also contact the provincial human rights commission office in your area:

Alberta
Human Rights Commission
501 Edwards
Professional Centre
10053 - 11th Street
Edmonton, Alberta
T5K 2H8
Phone: (403) 427-7661

Saskatchewan
Human Rights Commission
224 - 4th Avenue S.
8th Floor
Canterbury Towers
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan
S7K 5M5
(306) 664-5952

Manitoba
Human Rights Commission
Suite 200
323 Portage Avenue
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R3B 2CI
(204) 944-3007

Ontario
Human Rights Commission
400 University Avenue
12th Floor
Toronto, Ontario
M7A 1T7
(416) 965-6841

Quebec
Commission des droits de la personne
360 rue Saint-Jacques, Mezzanine
Montreal, Quebec
H2Y 1P5
(514) 873-5146

New Brunswick
Human Rights Commission
703 Brunswick Street
P.O. Box 6000
Fredericton, New Brunswick
E3B 5H1
(506) 453-2301

Nova Scotia
Human Rights Commission
P.O. Box 2221, 3rd Floor
Lord Nelson Arcade
5675 Spring Garden Road
Halifax, Nova Scotia
B3J 3C4
(902) 424-4111

Newfoundland
Human Rights Commission
Depatment of Justice
Third Entrance,
Elizabeth Towers
Elizabeth Avenue
P.O. Box 4750
St. John's, Newfoundland
A1C 5T7
(709) 737-2709

Prince Edward Island
Human Rights Commission
180 Richmond Street
Room 4
P.O. Box 2000
Charlottetown, P.E.I.
C1A 7N8
(902) 894-7797

Federation of Canadian Municipalities

The FCM is the national voice of municipal government in Canada. Founded in 1937, the FCM represents municipalities of all sizes and in every corner of the country. With a membership of 570 municipalities and all major provincial and territorial municipal associations, the FCM provides a national forum for the exchange of views and experiences among municipal leaders. It also keeps federal ministers, members of parliament and officials informed of the municipal viewpoint on national policies. Through its publications, meetings, and conferences, the FCM keeps member municipalities up-to-date on current issues facing local government.

Policy and program priorities are determined by the FCM's National Board of Directors comprising 65 elected municipal officials. A Standing Committee/Task Force system analyses, and takes action on matters of common interest to FCM's members.

At the 1986 Annual Conference, the Task Force on Race Relations received approval for its Policy Statement entitled "Improving Race Relations in Canadian Municipalities", thereby committing the FCM to continue work in promoting better race relations at the local level.